

MARVEL[®]
COMICS
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COMICS
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DAREDEVIL

TREE OF KNOWLEDGE FINALE



MCDANIEL

NEW YORK BOTANICAL GARDENS, THE BRONX.

SIMON VALK IS A HYDRA STORMTROOPER.
HE'S 29 YEARS OLD, BUT HE'S KILLED AT
LEAST TWICE THAT MANY MEN.

HE'S TORTURED, HE'S MAIMED, ALL IN THE
NAME OF ANARCHY.



SIMON VALK IS RUNNING FOR HIS LIFE.

RUNNING FROM THE DEVIL HIMSELF.



MINUTES BEFORE,
ON PATROL.

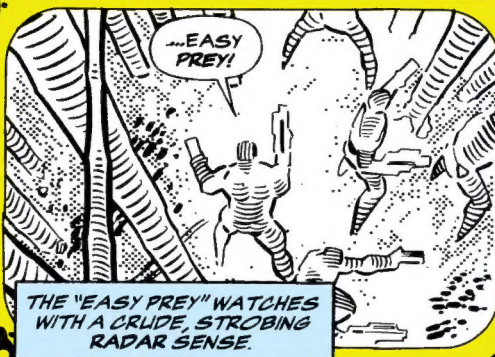
HUNTING THE REMAINS OF A
MASKED CRUSADER.

HE'S STILL
BLEEDING...



...EASY
PREY!

THE "EASY PREY" WATCHES
WITH A CRUDE, STROBING
RADAR SENSE.

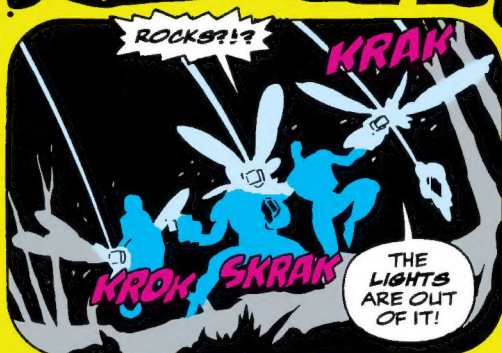


ROCKS?!?

KRAK

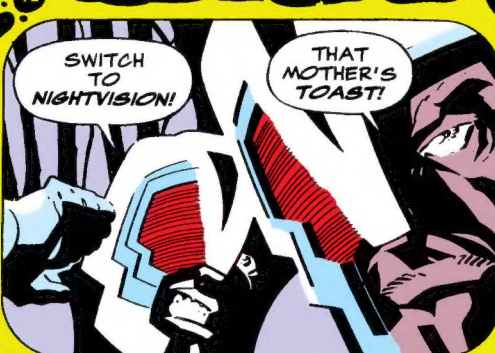
KRON SKRAK

THE
LIGHTS
ARE OUT
OF IT!



SWITCH
TO
NIGHTVISION!

THAT
MOTHER'S
TOAST!



AMBIENT ILLUMINATION
MAG. 057 LUX

LET'S
NAIL HIS
HORNHEADED
BACKSIDE...



GOT
THE S.O.B.--
THERE!

THE BLIND MAN LISTENS FOR THE
HISS-HUM OF ELECTRIC IMPULSES.

HYPERSENSITIVE FINGERS TRACK WARRING
CURRENTS IN THE THICK WIRES.



WHY
AIN'T HE
MOVING?

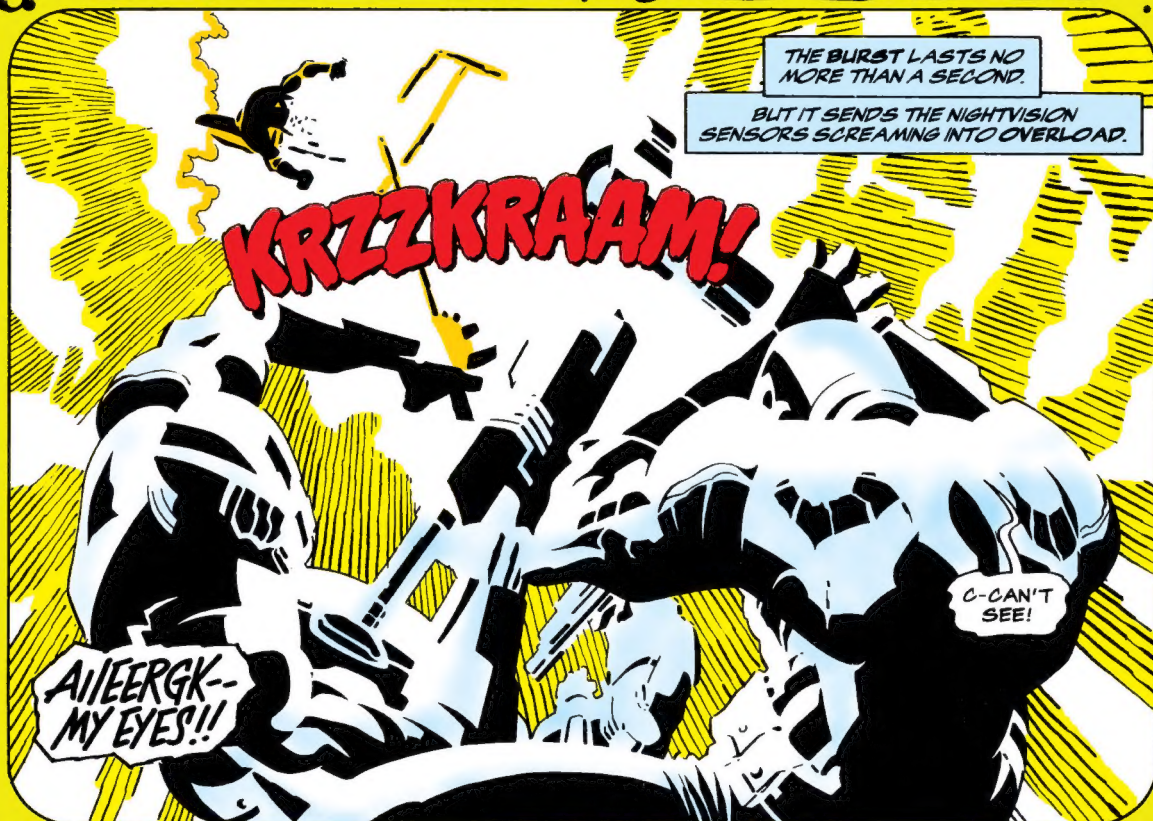
PRACTICING
AT BEING A STIFF,
THAT'S WHY! LOCK AN'
LOAD, FIRE WHEN--



SKZAK!

THE BURST LASTS NO
MORE THAN A SECOND.

BUT IT SENDS THE NIGHTVISION
SENSORS SCREAMING INTO OVERLOAD.



KRZZKRAAM!

C-CAN'T
SEE!

AIIIEERGK--
MY EYES!!



THE STORMTROOPERS NEVER
KNOW WHAT HITS THEM.

AGAIN AND AGAIN AND AGAIN.



BENEATH THE GARDEN, THE PARTLY
DISMANTLED HYDRA BASE IS SILENT--
-- NOT COUNTING SIMON VALK'S
PANICKED WHIMPERS.



HIS MIND RACES WITH EXCUSES TO TELL
BARON WOLFGANG VON STRUCKER.

O-
OUTNUMBERED...
WEAPONS
MALFUNCTIONED...
I'LL--I'LL TELL
HIM--

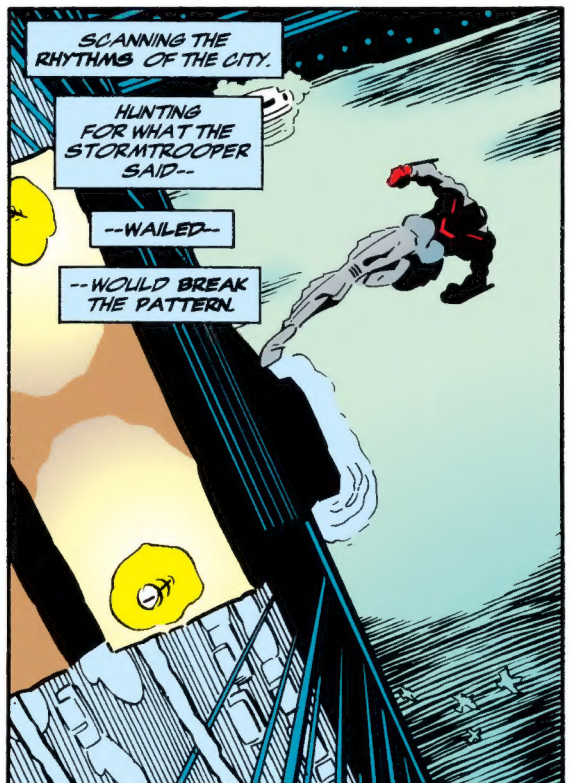
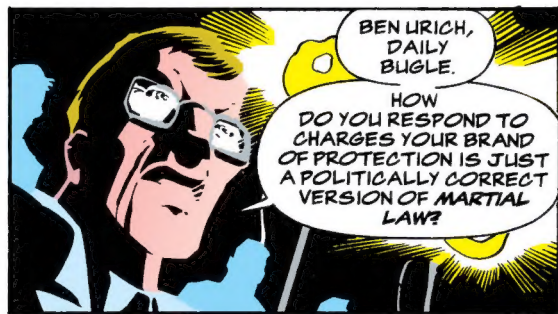
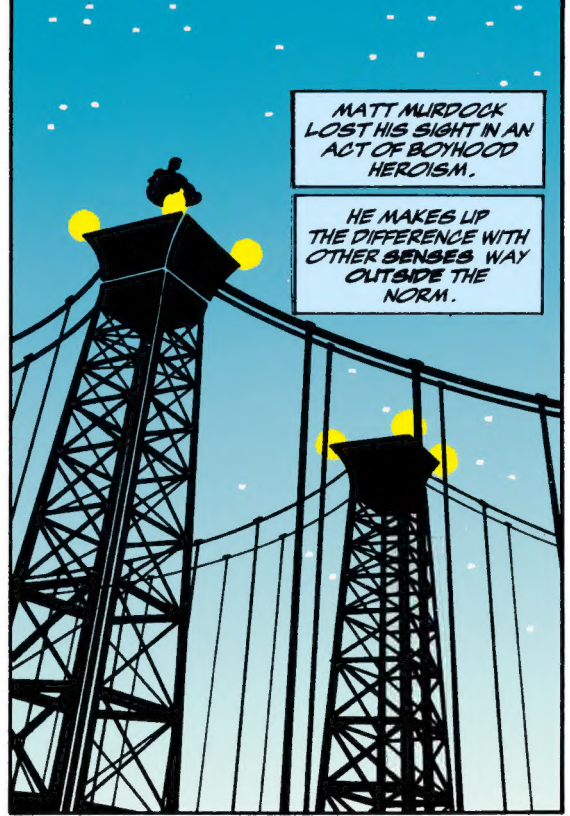


NOW...
WHERE DID
SYSTEM CRASH HEAD
WITH CAPTAIN
AMERICA?

UP TO
YOU HOW TO
ANSWER,
JACKBOOT. QUICK
AND EASY?

NOTHING.

OR SLOW
AND FULL OF
HURT...



THE WILLIAMSBURG
BRIDGE.

ABOUT SEVEN BLOCKS EAST
AND 24 SOUTH OF FIFTH AVENUE.

BY D.G. CHICHESTER
& SCOTT MCDANIEL

WITH
HECTOR COLLAZO INKER
BILL OAKLEY LETTERER
ANDREANI/AVINS COLORISTS
RALPH MACCCHIO EDITOR
TOM DEFALCO CHIEF

COLLISION
SENSORS ARE
HOWLING FROM
STARBOARD!

WE'RE
LOSING THE
CLOAKING
FIELD!

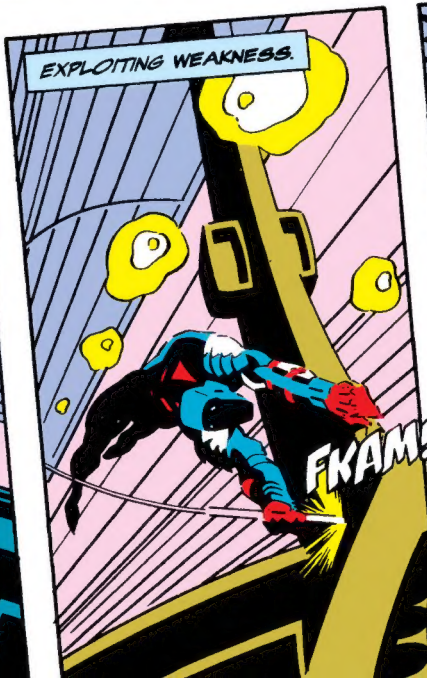
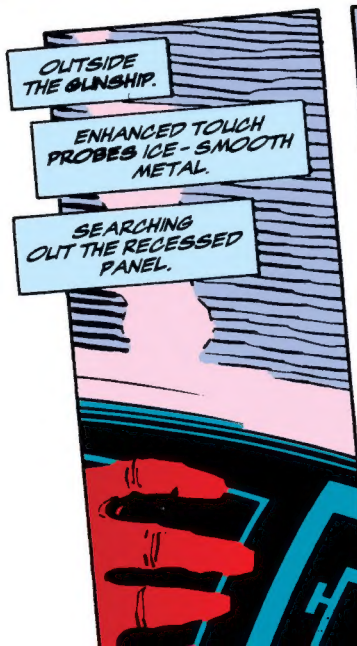
THNKAAM!

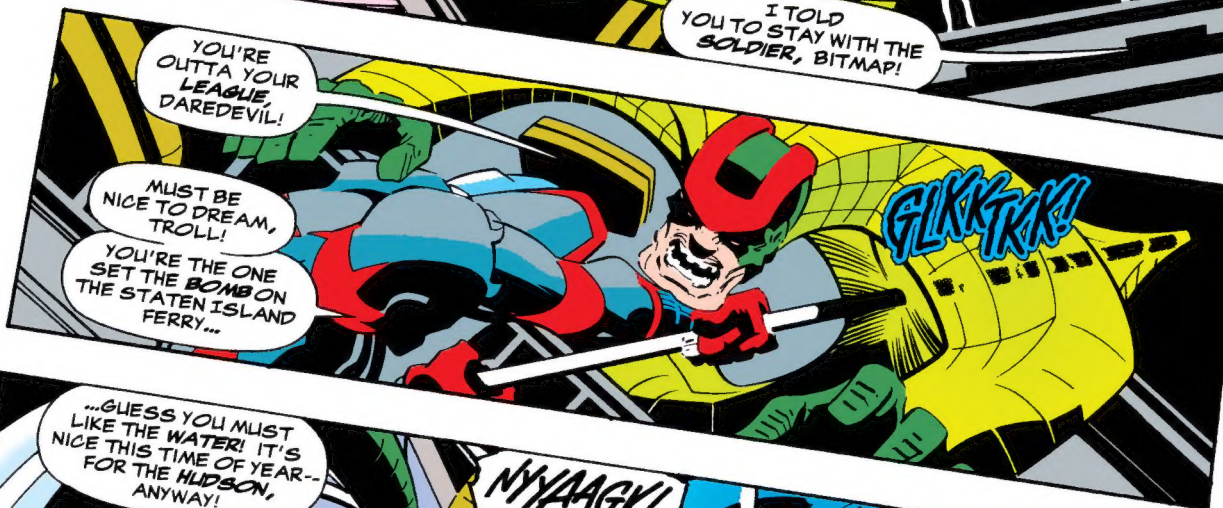
"It was... my purpose to convince such characters that it would no longer be healthy for them to ply their vocation without being handled roughly..."

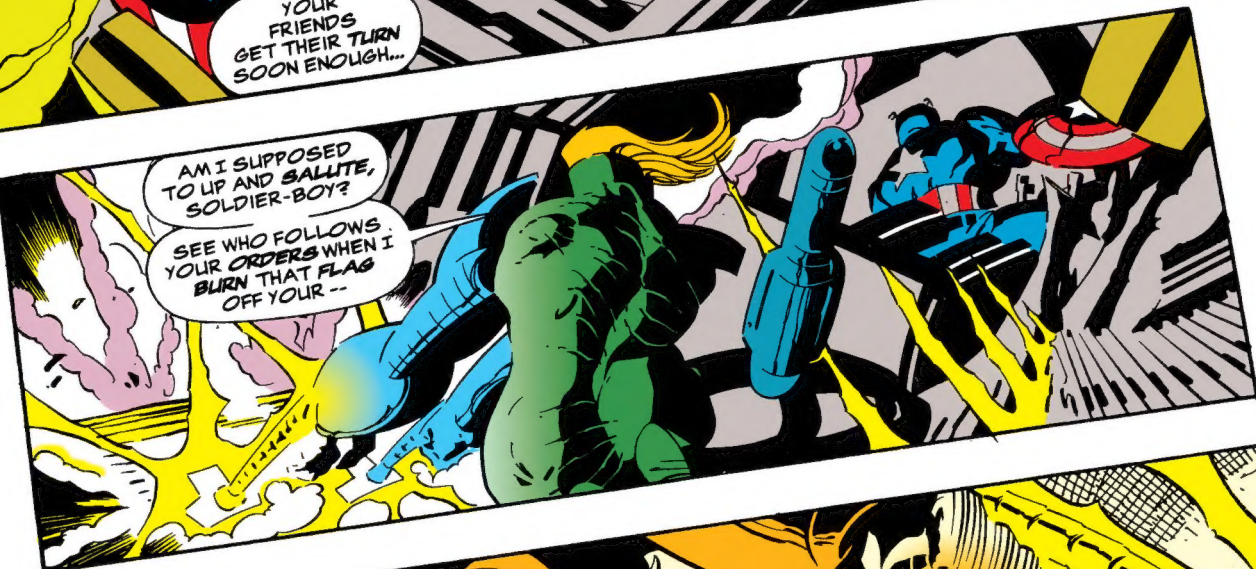
—William P. Wood, first head of the Secret Service, on criminal counterfeiters

TREE OF KNOWLEDGE • CONCLUSION

SOFTWARE









--WITH ITS SYSTEMS COOKED, IT'S GOING DOWN!

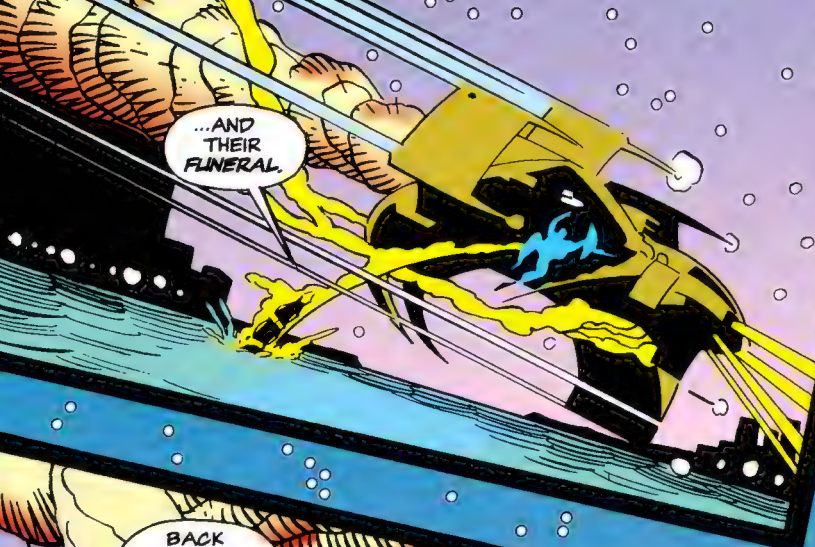
I DON'T LIKE LEAVING THEM--

THIS AIRCRAFT'S STRICTLY FLY-BY-WIRE--

YEAH! SURE, THAT'S IT! REBOOT THE SYSTEM AND--

WE'VE GOT TO RE-ROUTE THE GUIDANCE PROGRAMMING--

STAYING BEHIND'S THEIR CHOICE, DAREDEVIL....



...AND
THEIR
FUNERAL.



BACK
ON-LINE,
KILLOBYTE!
PULL 'ER UP
AND GET US
OUTTA--

SHLUKK!



KRAKADOOON!



THE
REST
OF THEIR
TEAM?

TWISTING AN
ALREADY SUSPICIOUS
TOOL INTO
SABOTAGING
FREEDOM EVEN
MORE!

YOU'VE CARRIED
THIS FIGHT FAR
ENOUGH, DAREDEVIL--
YOU DON'T HAVE TO
TAKE ANY MORE
RISKS.

INFOMORPH
AND THE OTHERS
SPLIT OFF TO FIND THE
LINE EATER AND MAKE
THEIR PLAY FOR THE
CLIPPER CHIP!

GUESS AGAIN,
CAPTAIN. YOU DON'T
HAVE TO WEAR THE
FLAG TO DEFEND
WHAT IT STANDS
FOR...

LIBERTY SCIENCE
CENTER, NEW JERSEY.

HANDS-ON, INTERACTIVE
EXHIBITS PROMOTING
LEARNING AND THE FREE
EXCHANGE OF IDEAS.

A CULT OF SECRECY AT THE
NATIONAL SECURITY AGENCY
GOT THEIR MITTS INTO THE
PLACE BACK AT THE DESIGN
STAGE--

-- COVERTLY INSTALLING
"LINE EATERS" TO FREELY
MONITOR THE PUBLICS' MOST
PRIVATE MOMENTS.

WHY'D
THE NSA
PICK
HERE?

CENTER OF
THE NORTHEAST
COMMUNICATIONS
GRID, SINCLAIR! PLUS
THERE'S NSA SPOOKS
PROBABLY GOT OFF
ON THE IRONY--

--OF A
SUPER-WIRE TAP
EATING INTO A
PLACE CALLED
"LIBERTY"!!

KEEP YOUR
INSIGHTFUL GUESS-
WORK TO YOURSELF,
STEEL COLLAR! OUR
FRIEND SPECTRUM
NEEDS TO
CONCENTRATE!

S'OKAY,
INFOMORPH...
ALMOST GOT ACCESS TO
THE OPERATING SYSTEM AS
AVATAR--SUPERUSER!

THIS
HARDWARE'S
SO SEXY-- I
COULD SPEND
ALL DAY
PLAYING WITH
IT!

INDULGE
YOUR TECHNOLOGIST
LATER -- OUR GOAL
RIGHT NOW IS THE
CLIPPER CHIP
SCHEMATICS
STORED HERE!

WE'VE MADE CHOICES
LIKE THE ONE YOU'RE
ABOUT TO, SINCLAIR...
AND LOOK WHAT'S
HAPPENED TO US!

YOU
DON'T HAVE
TO DO THIS...

YOU'RE--
YOU'RE SERIOUS,
COLLAR, AREN'T
YOU? WHY CARE
ABOUT ME?
WHY--?

WHY THIS DELAY!?

TEXTURE-MAPPING
BARON VON STRUCKER
FILE... RENDERING WITH
BIO-GOURAUAD
SHADING!



SOME WANT CLIPPER
IN EVERY PHONE, FAX AND
COMPUTER! SECURE
COMMUNICATIONS... BUT WITH
A GOVERNMENT OPTION TO
EAVESDROP AT WILL "FOR
THE GREATER GOOD"!

BUT WE CAN ESTABLISH
A COUNTER-MEASURE TO
CLIPPER'S BACK DOOR!
UNBEATABLE ENCRYPTION
WE'LL PLANT WITH THE
PUBLIC AT LARGE!

DISTRUST
WILL TAKE ROOT IN
THAT CLIMATE OF SECRECY!
ANARCHY WILL GROW AND
SPREAD! ONLY THE
FITTEST WILL
SURVIVE!



ANYTHING FROM
THE OTHERS,
WIREHEAD?



NO MORE
ALERTS FROM
"CIRCUIT
BOARD"-- JUST
ANOTHER
TECHNOSPIKE
PRANK, I BET!

INSIDE THE MUD--
WIREHEAD'S VIRTUAL
IMMERSIVE REALITY.

> A skanky hag
shambles toward the
magic crystal.



> Take Crystal!

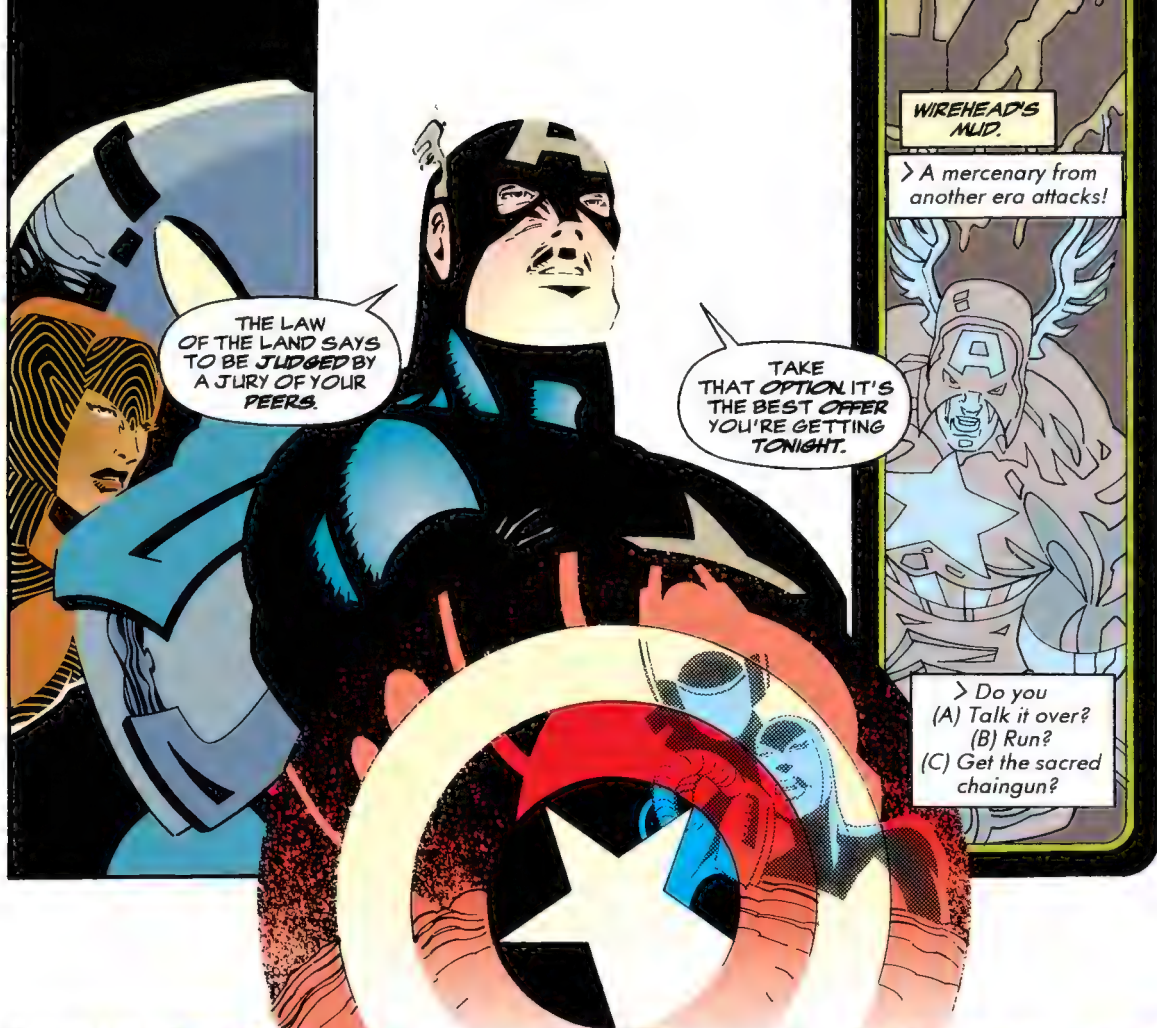


YOU--
YOU CAN'T STEAL
IT AWAY, WITCH!
THE PROMISE OF THE
DATASPHERE...
THE MAGIC OF
CYBERSPACE...

THIS ISN'T ONE OF
YOUR GAMES,
WIREHEAD! THE
BARON WAS CLEAR
ON THE PRICE OF
FAILURE!

DO I HAVE
TO REMIND YOU
AGAIN WHY WE'RE
HERE?





THE LAW
OF THE LAND SAYS
TO BE JUDGED BY
A JURY OF YOUR
PEERS.

TAKE
THAT OPTION. IT'S
THE BEST OFFER
YOU'RE GETTING
TONIGHT.

WIREHEAD'S
M.U.D.

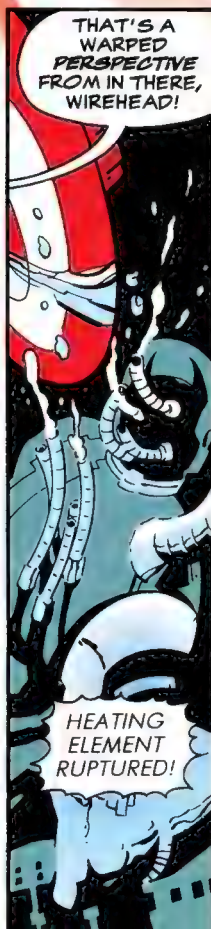
> A mercenary from
another era attacks!

> Do you
(A) Talk it over?
(B) Run?
(C) Get the sacred
chaingun?



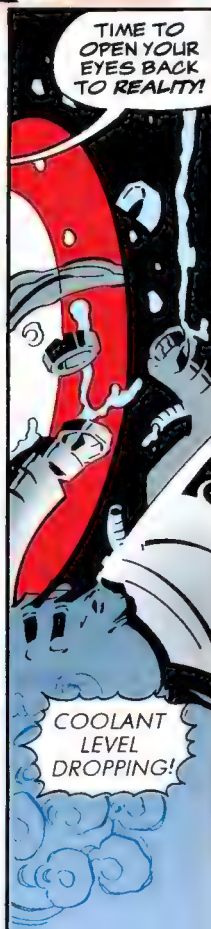
> GET SACRED
CHAINGUN!

EAT
DIGITAL
LEAD,
GI-JOE!



THAT'S A
WARPED
PERSPECTIVE
FROM IN THERE,
WIREHEAD!

HEATING
ELEMENT
RUPTURED!



TIME TO
OPEN YOUR
EYES BACK
TO REALITY!

COOLANT
LEVEL
DROPPING!



NOT
VERY NICE,
CAPTAIN...

B-UT
I DON'T
WANT THE
REAL WORLD!

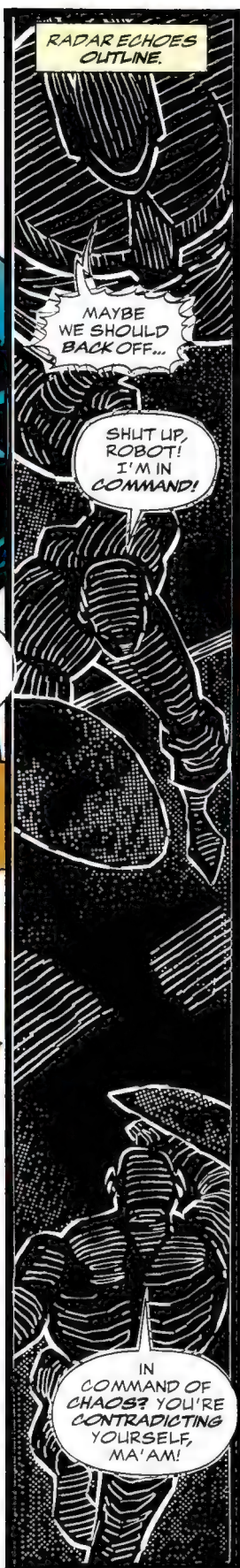
SCOOP
IT UP... YEAH!
GET BACK IN
THE MUD...



...JUST
WHAT I WOULD
EXPECT FROM AN
ESTABLISHMENT
DATACOP!

RENDERING
AMERICA IMAGE--
ORGANIC-PHONG
SHADING!

I'VE SAMPLED
YOU TOO! RIDING
THAT INFO HIGHWAY'S
CLUED ME IN TO YOUR
EVERY MOVE!



RADAR ECHOES
OUTLINE.

MAYBE
WE SHOULD
BACK OFF...

SHUT UP,
ROBOT!
I'M IN
COMMAND!

IN
COMMAND OF
CHAOS? YOU'RE
CONTRADICTIONG
YOURSELF,
MA'AM!

ETCHING A PATTERN OF
ACTION AND STRATEGY.

I'M--NOT--
A--ROBOT!!

WORDS
COVER YOUR
WEAKNESS, SOLDIER!
THERE'S SOMETHING
EATING AT YOU
FROM THE
INSIDE...

A LITTLE
SOMETHING
SPECIAL FOR YOU,
"CAPTAIN"
INFOMORPH...

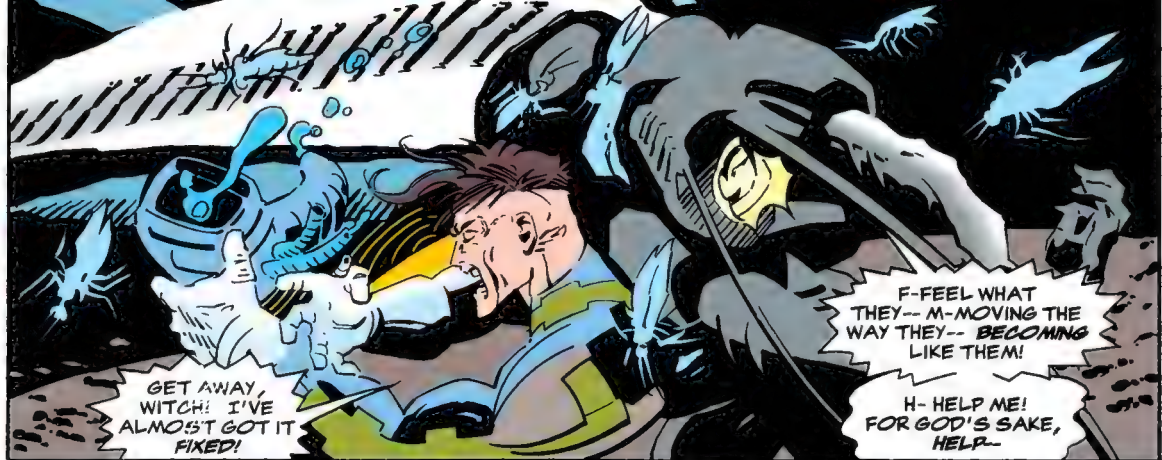
SKRAASH!

GARISH
DISTRACTION,
DAREDEVIL... NOTHING
MORE! YOU'VE BEEN
WARNED TO STAY
CLEAR OF THIS
GAME...

TAKING
CHANCES
COMES WITH
THE NAME,
LADY...

S-SAMPLE
ENGINE OVERLOAD!
W-WIREFRAME R-RAY-
TRACING--
RENDERING--INSECT
PATTERN!

...BESIDES,
I BRING SUCH
NEAT TOYS TO
THE PLAY-
GROUND!



GET AWAY,
WITCH! I'VE
ALMOST GOT IT
FIXED!

F-FEEL WHAT
THEY-- M-MOVING THE
WAY THEY-- BECOMING
LIKE THEM!

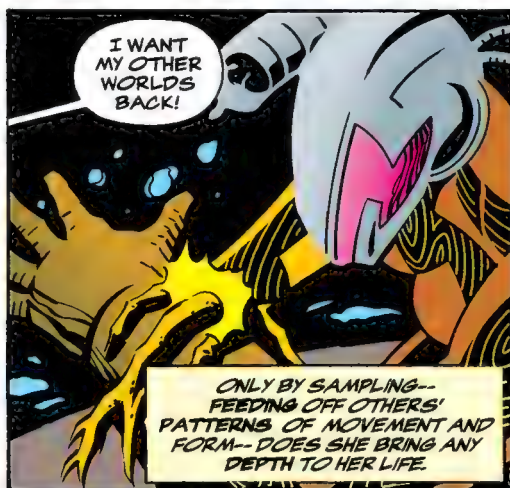
H- HELP ME!
FOR GOD'S SAKE,
HELP--



N-NEED A
NEW FOCUS! GIVE--
GIVE ME YOUR
GEAR!

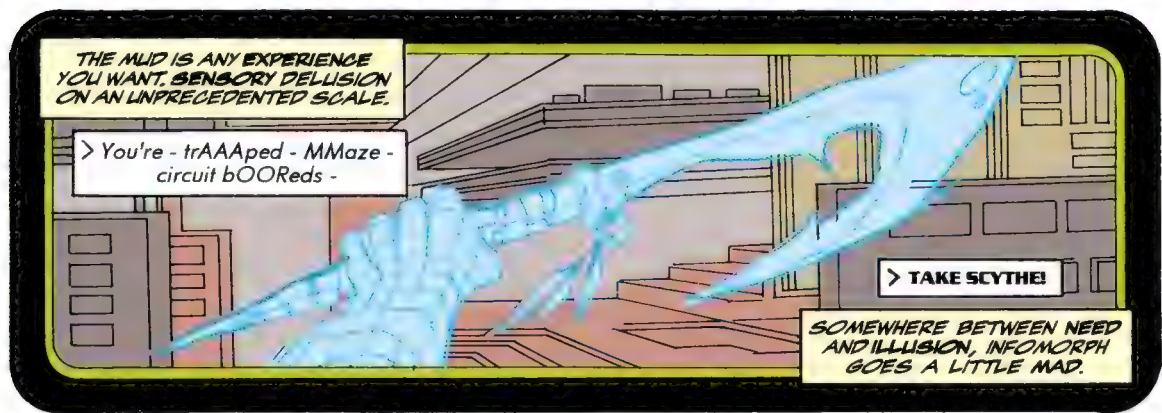
DON'T! I
CAN'T STAND
IT OUT
HERE!

INFOMORPH'S EXISTENCE
BORDERS ON
TWO DIMENSIONAL.



I WANT
MY OTHER
WORLDS
BACK!

ONLY BY SAMPLING--
FEEDING OFF OTHERS'
PATTERNS OF MOVEMENT AND
FORM-- DOES SHE BRING ANY
DEPTH TO HER LIFE.



THE MUD IS ANY EXPERIENCE
YOU WANT. SENSORY DELUSION
ON AN UNPRECEDENTED SCALE.

> You're - trAAAped - MMaze -
circuit bOOReds -

> TAKE SCYTHE!

SOMEWHERE BETWEEN NEED
AND ILLUSION, INFOMORPH
GOES A LITTLE MAD.

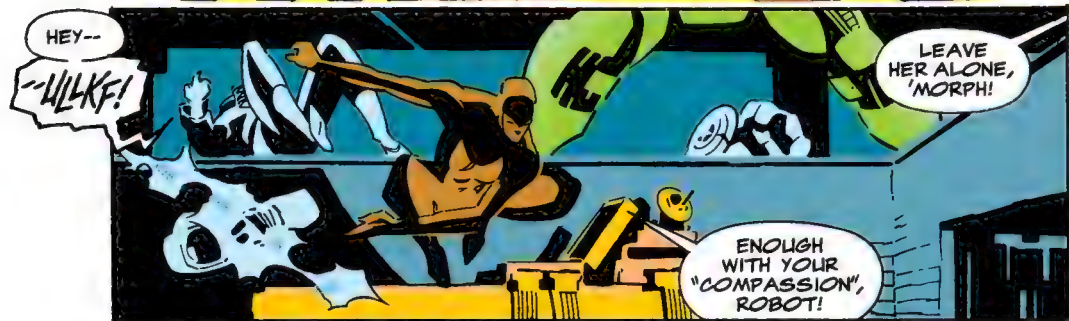


> Cut a path through
the maze!

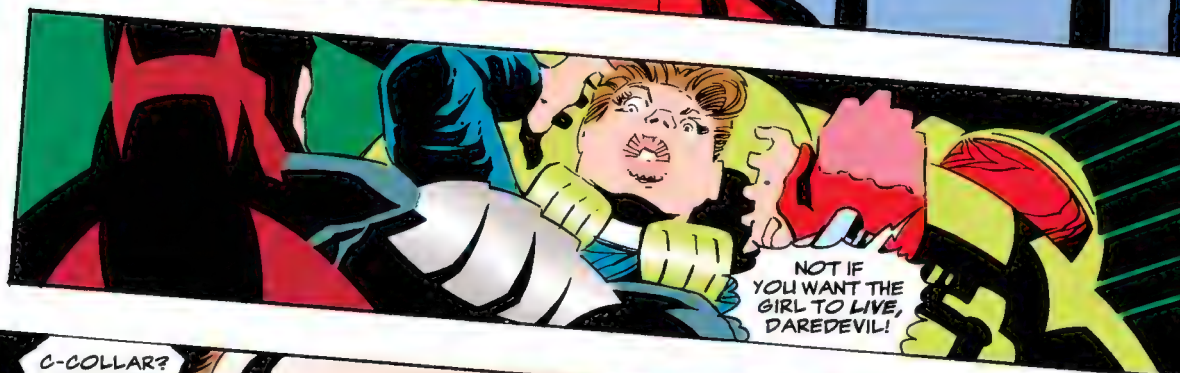
YOU--YOU
DON'T DESERVE
WHAT'S IN HERE,
WIREHEAD!



THIS
ENDS NOW,
INFOMORPH!







PLAY ALONG, SINCLAIR... PLEASE! IF THEY THINK YOU WERE BEING FORCED INTO THIS, THEY'LL GO EASIER ON YOU!



SHE WAS A USEFUL PUPPET ONCE WE TOOK HER HOSTAGE!

SHE'LL MAKE A PRETTY CORPSE UNLESS YOU LET ME WALK!



NICE THOUGHT, CAPTAIN... BUT NO NEED.

BENEATH THE HUM OF SERVO-MOTORS.

THE SOUND OF A HEARTBEAT SKIPPING.



YOU'RE LYING.

CAUGHT IN A LIE.



YOU'RE LYING.
PUT HER DOWN.
TELL ME WHY.

LOOK
ME IN THE EYE
AND I'LL TELL
YOU!



THAT'S--
THAT'S NOT
NECESSARY.

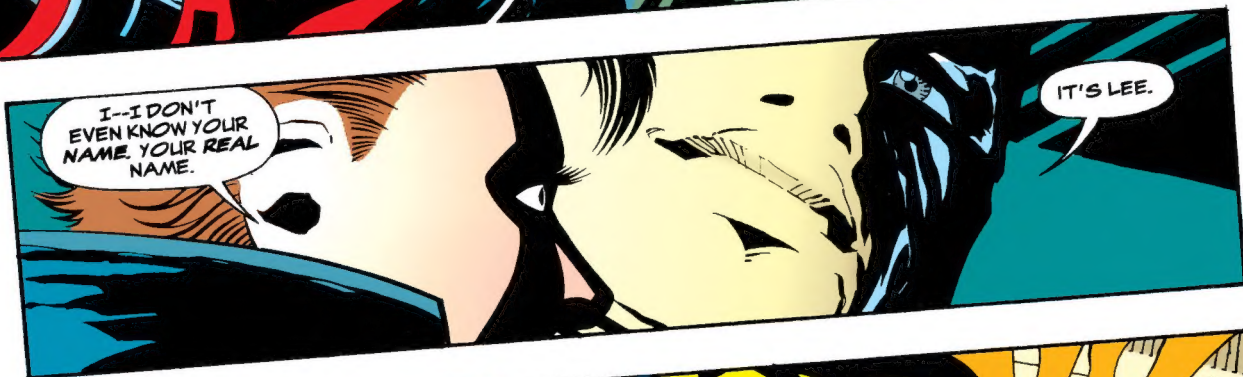
YES IT IS!
LOOK ME IN THE
EYE AND PROMISE
ME--

--PROMISE ME YOU
WON'T LET THE SYSTEM BRAND
HER! BECAUSE THAT'S EASIER
THAN TRYING TO UNDERSTAND
HER CURIOSITY!

AND IF THEY BURY
HER DEEP ENOUGH... THE
ONLY WAY SHE'LL DIG
OUT IS TO BECOME
LIKE US!

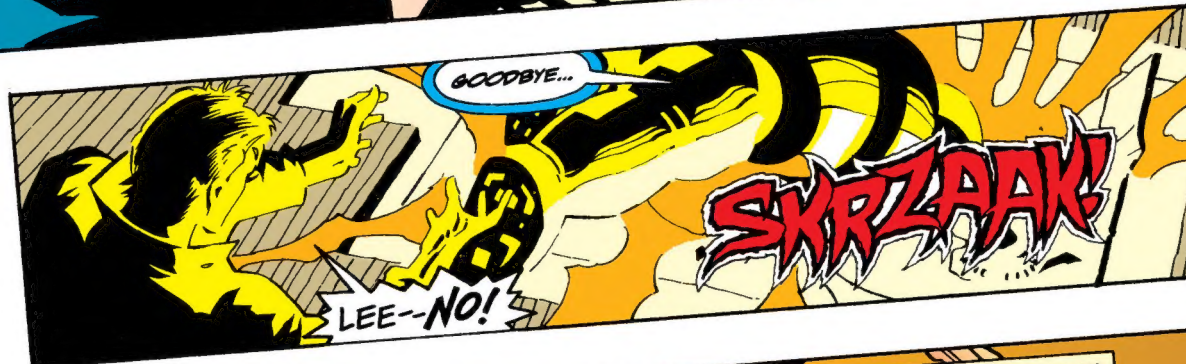


I PROMISE.



I--I DON'T
EVEN KNOW YOUR
NAME, YOUR REAL
NAME.

IT'S LEE.



GOODBYE...

LEE--NO!



GET DOWN!

ENERGY FEEDS BACK,
TERRIFYING AND UGLY.

TURNING WHAT WAS A YOUNG
GIRL'S AMUSEMENT INTO A
LOST FRIEND'S GRAVE.

SPECTRUM
KNEW WHAT SHE
WAS DOING.

I HAVE A
RESPONSIBILITY TO
THE AVENGERS... TO
CALL IN THE
AUTHORITIES...

I RESPECT
THAT, CAPTAIN...
BUT I'VE GOT A
PROMISE TO
KEEP!

THIS
COUNTRY'S
BUILT ON THE IDEA
OF SECOND
CHANCES...

DON'T
PLAY ON MY IDEALS,
VIGILANTE! IT'S HERS
I'M WORRIED
ABOUT.

I'LL TAKE
ON THAT
RESPONSIBILITY.

YOU'RE
SOUNDING...
A LOT LIKE THE
MAN WHO USED TO
WEAR THOSE
HORNS...

MY MISTAKE.
WON'T HAPPEN
AGAIN.

I'M... NOT
SO SURE...

HEY--DON'T
I GET A SAY IN
ALL THIS?

NO.

THERE'S NOTHING HARDER FOR A
MAN BORN TO DEFEND THE LAW
THAN TO TURN HIS BACK.

EVEN WITH THE BEST OF INTENTIONS
IT TAKES EVERYTHING HE'S GOT.

AND ALTHOUGH HE'S NOT A
RELIGIOUS MAN, STEVE ROGERS--

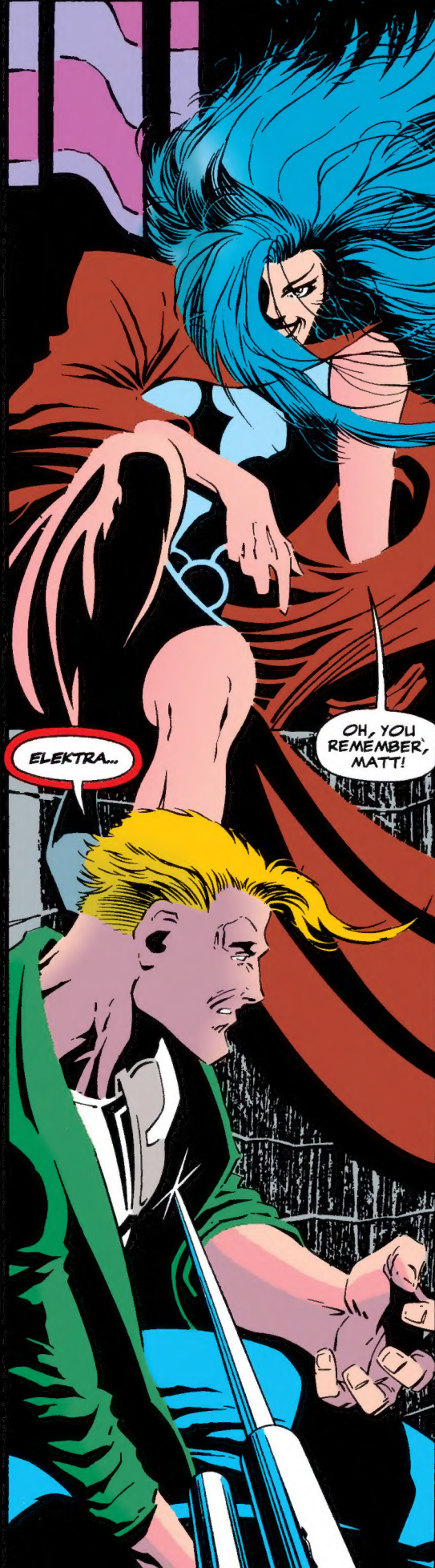
--HOLDING THE RANK OF
CAPTAIN AMERICA--


--PRAYS HE'S MADE THE
RIGHT DECISION.

TOP OF THE GE BUILDING,
NEXT MORNING.

STYLIZED SPIRES PIERCE
THE SKY. THEY LOOK LIKE
RADIO WAVES, AND EVOKE A
SPIRIT OF COMMUNICATION.


MATT MURDOCK CONSIDERS
HOW HE'LL COMMUNICATE
THE NEED FOR SINCLAIR
SPECTRUM'S FILE TO
DISAPPEAR.



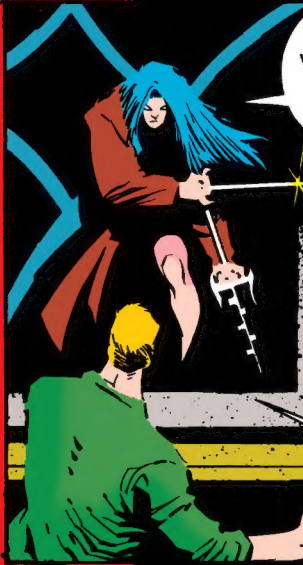


NOT
'TILL YOU'VE
FINISHED HERE?
HOW DOES IT
GO, hmmm?

LIL' MS.
SPECTRUM NO
LONGER "OFFICIALLY"
EXISTS, AND MATT
MURDOCK--



--OR IS THAT
"JACK BATLIN?" OR
WHAT PASSES FOR
DAREDEVIL THESE
DAYS? ANYWAY, ONE OF
YOU KEEPS HER
IN LINE!




YOU TRIED
INFLUENCING FACTS
WITH YOURSELF...LOOK
HOW THAT'S TURNED
OUT! YOU FAKE THIS
CON-MAN BATLIN
ROLE...

...BUT HOLD
TIGHT TO THE
DAREDEVIL NAME!
YOU GAVE UP ON
MURDOCK,
MATT...

...YOU GAVE UP
ON ME. WHY NOT
THE REST?

I DON'T
NEED THIS!



MAYBE YOU
DO. MAYBE YOU
NEED A
REMINDER.

WE TRAINED FOR
SOMETHING ONCE,
MATT... BEFORE WE
BOTH TURNED!

BE READY
TO STAND UP TO
THAT CHALLENGE
AGAIN...OR BE READY
TO STAND OUT OF
MY WAY...

THEN ELEKTRA'S
GONE, SILENT AS SHE
CAME.

HER NINJA WAYS
INVISIBLE TO EVEN HIS
SENSES.

ALL THAT'S THERE NOW
ARE THE STREETS OF
NEW YORK-- HIS
STREETS-- LICKING
WOUNDS FROM THE
RECENT WAR.

SOMEDAY, THAT
TWISTED GRID MAY BE
AN OFF-RAMP ON THE
VALANTED "INFORMATION
SUPERHIGHWAY."

BUT TECHNOLOGY ON THOSE
STREETS WON'T JUST BE CUTTING
EDGE. IT'LL BE GOUGING-MAIMING-
BLEEDING EDGE.

AND MATTHEW MURDOCK
WILL BE THERE AT THE
FRONT LINES TO DEFEND
THE CITY THAT'S IN HIS
SOUL.

LOG OUT.